Cliff Richard – Stronger (1989)

1 Stronger Than That 4:41 2 Who's In Love 4:30 3 The Best Of Me 4:10 4 Clear Blue Skies 2:54 5 Lean On You 5:02 6 Keep Me Warm 4:24 7 I Just Don't Have The Heart 3:26 8 Joanna 3:51 9 Everybody Knows 3:48 10 Forever You Will Be Mine 4:24 11 Better Day 4:48 12 Share A Dream 4:30 Matt Aitken Drum Programming, Keyboards, Producer Aswad Multi Instruments, Producer, Vocals (Background) Keith Bessey Drum Programming Dave Bishop Saxophone John Clark Guitar Mark Griffiths Bass Pete Howarth Vocals (Background) Steve Laurie Guitar Mae McKenna Vocals (Background) Paul Moessl Drum Programming, Synthesizer Sonia Jones Morgan Vocals (Background) Mick Mullins Vocals (Background) Keith Murrell Vocals (Background) Alan Park Piano Henry Spinetti Drums Mike Stock Drum Programming, Keyboards, Producer Miriam Stockley Vocals (Background) Alan Tarney Drums, Guitar, Keyboards, Producer

The 30th anniversary of Cliff Richard's entry into the music industry was marked in 1988, and the year fittingly found him experiencing one of his most successful spells ever. "Mistletoe and Ivory" became the biggest-selling single of the year, while the follow-up, the number two hit "The Best of Me," established him as the first British artist to release 100 singles. The Private Collection 1979-1988, a compilation of a decade's worth of hits, topped the chart, and Stronger, the first new album of his fourth decade, was to spin off no less than four hit singles, including "Just Don't Have the Heart," a dynamic collaboration with producers Stock, Aitken & Waterman. The album itself represents one of the most eclectic of Richard's entire career, a fact signposted by his union with British reggae band Aswad for the wonderful "Share a Dream." The aforementioned "The Best of Me" stands as one of the loveliest ballads he'd cut in years, and if Stronger has any serious shortcomings, it's the reliance on machines, not men, for the drum sounds. Even at his weakest, Richard's records had rarely lacked for emotion, but the robotic percussion saps the soul from far too much of the music. Indeed, if the selection of songs had been any weaker, Stronger might well have collapsed altogether. Instead, the likes of "Everybody Knows," "Better Day," and "Lean on You" conspire to raise it so high that many fans regard Stronger as one of the strongest of all Richard's post-Shadows albums. ---Dave Thompson, AllMusic Review

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